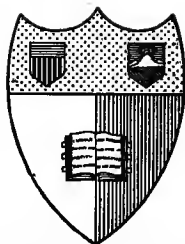


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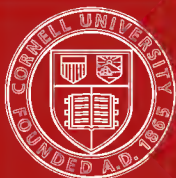
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**F**ULL AND COMPLETE DESCRIPTION AND CONNECTION OF  
**SIR JOHN SOANE'S**  
**HOUSE, MUSEUM, & LIBRARY**

Written in 1835 by

**MRS. BARBARA HOFLAND**

Authoress of 'A Son of Genius', &c.

Edited from the 'Description' of 1835 by  
Sir John Soane, R.A., by

**ARTHUR T. BOLTON, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.**

Soane Medallist, Curator of Sir John Soane's Museum

With eight illustrations of the House and Museum



SIR JOHN SOANE, 1753-1837

PRINTED AT OXFORD BY FREDERICK HALL

1919



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY THE EDITOR

THIS admirable description of the House and Museum of Sir John Soane, by a lady friend of the Founder, an authoress well known in her day, is in no way intended to replace the familiar Official Handbook of the Museum. The latter in its origin is a shortened version, by George Bailey, the first Curator, of Sir John Soane's own final edition of the 'Description of the House' (1835-6). To this original text of the Handbook a mass of valuable artistic and other data has been added by the successive Curators, who have edited the many editions that have appeared from 1840 to 1910.

Mrs. Barbara Hofland's descriptive notes, signed B.H., which are given only in the 1835 Description, follow the successive stages of Soane's tour round the House and Museum, but they form a complete account in themselves, and will be found to gain by being brought together in their natural sequence. These notes have never formed any part of the Handbook. Some writers have strangely assumed that B. H. was a mere *nom de plume* for Soane himself. The immediate value of her description

is that of a first hand appreciation by a sympathetic and impressionable lady, unquestionably responsive to the vigorous and original mentality of the Architect-Collector. Their friendship was of long standing and ceased only with the death of Sir John Soane in 1837.

*Barbara Hofland* (1770–1844), daughter of Robert Wreaks a manufacturer, was born in Sheffield. On the early death of her father she was brought up by a maiden aunt. Her first essay 'Characteristics of some leading inhabitants in Sheffield' appeared (1795) in a local paper. In 1796 she married T. Bradshaw Hoole, merchant of that town, who died two years later of consumption. Her invested property having been lost by the failure of a firm, a volume of her poems was published by subscription in 1805, and she also tried unsuccessfully to start a boarding school at Harrogate.

*Thomas Christopher Hofland* (1777–1834), born at Worksop, Co. Nottingham, was the son of a rich manufacturer of Cotton Mill machinery. His father had moved to London in 1790 where, however, he failed and became poor. Young Hofland, after some brief tuition under John Rathbone, started as a landscape artist, exhibiting at the Academy from 1799 to 1805, while living with his parents at Kew. In 1805 he was teaching at Derby, and then moved to Doncaster, and Knaresborough, where he married Miss Barbara Hoole (1808).



In 1811 he decided to return to London, and they lived in Newman Street. Hofland found employment in making copies of the pictures in the British Institution in Russell Street, and in 1814 he gained the prize of a hundred guineas for 'A Storm off Scarborough'. The picture was bought by the Marquess of Stafford.

In 1816 Mr. Hofland undertook the illustration, and his wife the text, of an illustrated account of 'White Knights' for the Duke of Marlborough, an elaborate work privately printed in 1819. Not being paid the expense incurred he was for a time involved in financial difficulties. Mrs. Hofland had brought out 'Son of a Genius' her best book (1812), and 'The Clergyman's Widow' in the same year, followed by the 'Merchant's Widow' (1814), 'Ivanowna' had also appeared in 1813. A pamphlet on the Queen Caroline Question, and 'Poetical Illustrations' (1832), are other instances of her numerous writings.

In May 1821 Hofland held an exhibition of his pictures in New Bond Street. They were chiefly Views of the Lake scenery. One of his pictures 'Richmond Hill' was engraved by Charles Heath, and another 'A View of Hampstead' is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Hofland published in 1839 'The British Angler's Manuel', being an enthusiastic fisherman.

In 1840 he visited Italy for nine months on behalf of Lord Egremont. He left Richmond for

Leamington in 1842, where he died of cancer. A memoir by his son Thomas Richard Hofland (died 1876) appears in the Second Edition (1848) of 'The British Angler'.

The friendship between the Hoflands and Soane began some time not long after Mrs. Hofland's arrival in London with her husband in 1811. It is possible that Soane may have met Hofland before, but at any rate Mrs. Soane kindly called on the new-comer, who was a stranger in London.

Soane joined in some of Hofland's fishing recreations. Mrs. Hofland, who was a tireless writer, reported some of Soane's Lectures at the Royal Academy.

She was one of those who strove to soften the crushing blow of Mrs. Soane's death in November 1815.

The Hoflands moved to 10 Montpelier Road, Twickenham, in August 1816, but the friendship with Soane was maintained by an interesting correspondence.

Among her own friends was Miss Mitford, (1787-1855), authoress of the once famous 'Our Village' (1824-32).

An account which has been preserved speaks of Mrs. Hofland's open, generous, and loyal, if impulsive heart. Her enthusiasm was easily aroused, and she was apt to be carried away by her fertile and facile pen, describing her friends and acquaintances under the thinnest of disguises to their

infinite annoyance. This quality of her mind is, however, of conspicuous value in the present instance, as it is certain that the inspiration of this 'Description' is Soane's, and that it affords us an insight into the way in which he would pour his ideas about his house and collection into the ears of a sympathetic and appreciative visitor. Soane is apt in his own writings to adopt a dry and formal style which is very rarely relaxed. It conveys no idea of the fiery energy of his mind, which was capable of striking out phrases of a peculiar originality, characteristically Soanic. Some of these quite unmistakable utterances survive in the writings of Mrs. Hofland.

With this introduction of the authoress the Editor makes his bow and leaves her in charge of the Visitor to the House and Museum of Sir John Soane.

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# Sir John Soane's House, Museum, and Library,

described by a Lady in 1835.

Mrs. Barbara Höfland commences her tour round the house of Sir John Soane by a characteristic note of the Entrance Hall as follows.

## THE ENTRANCE HALL.

THE vista-like character of this entrance to what may be truly called a Temple of Art is extremely pleasing, whether seen as a whole, illuminated by various coloured lights, or examined in parts, each of which has the same advantages, since the light from the outer door, of painted glass, and those which descend from the staircase, and also from the breakfast-parlour, aided by reflections from mirrors judiciously intersected near the last-mentioned room, as well as within it—all tend to produce those richly-tinted lights so highly admired in our finest cathedrals. In returning, I thought the most beautiful effect was produced when the outer door was thrown wide open, whilst the one separating the lobby from the hall remained closed, the glass in it being so finely painted as to demand particular attention and strong light. . . . 'The Arts are the handmaids of our pleasures; they administer to some of our most refined enjoyments, and give an elegance and charm to life.'

*(Entering)*

## THE LIBRARY AND DINING-ROOM.

The general effect of these rooms is admirable: they combine the characteristics of wealth and elegance, taste and comfort, with those especial riches which belong expressly to Literature and

No. I.



SIR JOHN SOANE'S LIBRARY AND DINING-ROOM.

Art—to the progressive proofs of human intellect and industry, given from age to age, in those works which most decisively evince utility and power. That which might be termed the triumph of Architecture, and which succeeding ages may adopt and complete in our metropolis (where a part only, defrauded of its fair proportions, yet appears), is seen in the beautiful model of the Board of Trade and Privy Council Offices,<sup>1</sup> which we find the more admirable as a whole the longer we contemplate it. But, since every design which is truly great must possess that union of parts which constitutes the best claim to magnificence, so must we the more lament that it is left incomplete, and of course exposed to the danger of future incongruous associations. The paintings on the walls of these rooms accord in excellence with the models; they exhibit the highest powers of the Art, whether we gaze on the admirable portrait of the owner, by Sir Thomas Lawrence; the well-known *chef-d'œuvre* of Sir Joshua Reynolds; or the lovely creations of H. Howard; and from these enchanting productions we find it difficult to turn, even to the Vases, although we have seldom seen any of equal magnitude, and perhaps none of equal value. When we recollect what Cicero tells us of the high estimation in which the Sicilians held these works of Art, and consider through how many ages some of them have passed, transmitting to us knowledge of graceful form and valuable material that might have been otherwise unknown, and in their painted embellishments confirming historic details of facts, customs, sacrifices, and personal appearances, otherwise overwhelmed by the tide of time—well may we reckon them amongst the highest gifts of

<sup>1</sup> Now the Treasury Building, Whitehall, reconstructed by Sir Charles Barry, R.A., 1849.

the Arts, and the choicest treasures which opulence and taste can accumulate.

The valuable books and illuminated manuscripts on vellum contained in this room demand particular attention. Not only are the finest editions of the best authors found here, but many which have a peculiar value from circumstances. The original copy of 'Gierusalemme Liberata' was purchased at the sale of the Earl of Guildford's Library in 1829. This great literary treasure was formerly in the possession of the learned Barrafaldo. Serrasi describes it, and names the emendations given by the poet in the margin, in his edition of Tasso printed at Florence in 1724; but expresses his fears that it had been taken out of Italy. Alluding to this circumstance, its late noble possessor has written on the fly-leaf: 'I would not wish to hurt the honest pride of any Italian; but the works of a great genius are the property of all ages and all countries: and I hope it will be recorded to future ages, that England possesses the original manuscript of one of the four greatest epic poems the world has produced, and, beyond all doubt, *the only one of the four now in existence.*'

Who can look on this most interesting manuscript, and not remember Tasso's touching lamentation on the conclusion of this very book, as given by Lord Byron?

'But this is o'er—my pleasant task is done!  
 My long-sustaining friend of many years.  
 If I do blot thy final page with tears,  
 Know, that my sorrows have wrung from me none.  
 But thou, my young creation—my soul's child!  
 Which, ever playing round me, came and smiled,  
 And woo'd me from myself with thy sweet sight!  
 Thou too art gone—and so is my delight;—  
 And therefore do I weep, and inly bleed,  
 With this last bruise upon a broken reed.'



‘The History of the Jews,’ by Josephus, is a large MS. volume, richly embellished with numerous miniature drawings finely executed, together with illuminated capitals, in perfect preservation.

‘The Giulio Clovio MS.’ is an exquisitely beautiful volume, embellished with elegant paintings, and the leaves surrounded with an abundance of Etruscan and Arabesque ornaments, which are alike delicate and brilliant: it is bound in green velvet, which contrasts agreeably with the purity and fastidious neatness of the interior. Nor must we leave these rooms without another glance towards the enriched ceilings, which in their decorations confer an air of general grandeur and suitable completion. The painted ceilings of many of the mansions of our elder nobility have been much criticized, as those

‘Where sprawl the saints of Verrio and Laguerre’;

but these beautiful mythological pictures, the painted poems of a mind imbued with all that is graceful in form and pure in conception, cannot fail to impart pleasure to all who are capable of admiring that which is excellent, and approving that which is appropriate.

*(Passing through to)*

#### THE LITTLE STUDY AND DRESSING-ROOM.

These rooms are the smallest in this mansion, but they are not the less worthy of attention: on the contrary, as Nature frequently renders the smallest flowers, and the smallest animals the most beautiful, and appears to finish the most minute productions in the most elaborate manner—so has the great Architect to whom we are indebted for

all around us rendered these rooms receptacles of the most beautiful specimens of his art.

The fragments of Grecian and Roman sculpture, whether parts of friezes, cornices, or animals, are executed with singular elegance, and chiselled so finely, that it would be impossible for the hardest metals to represent them with more sharpness, or the freest pencil to depict them with more flowing grace or satisfactory accuracy. These remarks apply more particularly to the specimens over the chimney-piece and on the sides of the window, in the Study, which well merits its name; since no extraneous object whatever meets the view, and the eye assists the mind by directing it to that which best deserves the contemplation of the Artist.

The same perception of retirement and of abundant subjects for meditation is continued in the Dressing-room and adjacent recess, whether we look towards the 'Central Court' on the right, or the ruins of the 'Monk's Monastery' on the left. The former presents objects of architectural interest classical in character, the latter a prodigious number of antique heads and other ornaments from mediæval and other buildings.

Contrasting small things with great ones, every person must look with interest on the sulphur casts of seals and gems, their delicate execution and classical design claiming particular attention. So will the bell-light of the recess; for it is of that soft primrose hue so peculiarly adapted for the exhibition of marbles, imparting the tint of time to those which have not attained it, yet not increasing its effects on the more ancient. On this subject I must by and by be permitted to expatiate more freely as we advance through the Museum.

*(Preceding the Hogarth Room on the Right is)*

### THE CORRIDOR.

The effect of Grecian columns symmetrically placed is always grand and beautiful, as we see in St. Martin's Church. These, of Corinthian architecture (that elegant order which owes its origin to the purest affections of the heart) here disposed in transverse lines, are strictly suitable to the place they occupy, and to those striking objects whither they conduct us.

The transverse corridor we are now to enter (on the right) is rich in works of a larger description than those which adorn the rooms we have passed. Looking up, we see mighty fragments from the temples devoted to the most gorgeous and poetical religion the mind of man ever devised.

Surely we have here 'sermons in stones'. If Paganism could lead the most polished people to take delight in seeing the physical energies of man devoted to the destruction of his brother-man, even by losing his own life—if murder and suicide could form amusement, not only to a debased and ferocious mob, but to the statesmen, philosophers, and ladies of Rome; well might human nature, when blest with one ray from heaven, turn from it in disgust and seek, in the genius of Christianity, a power to smile even in the arms of death.

Everywhere we behold objects in perfect keeping with the sentiments they tend to awaken. Marble fragments, noble friezes, most magnificent and diversified capitals, casts of most difficult attainment, and casts from curule chairs in which have sat men who were the conquerors and rulers of the world, and whose words and actions even yet exert an influence on the destinies of mankind—

by turns elicit observation. On every side are objects of deep interest alike to the antiquary who loves to explore and retrace them through ages past; the student, who, in cultivating a classic taste, becomes enamoured of their forms; and the imaginative man, whose excursive fancy give to each 'a local habitation and a name' in association with the most interesting events and the most noble personages the page of history has transmitted for our contemplation.

Yes! these are all feathers shed from the wing of Time, reminding us of the glories of days that are past, and of countries comparatively sunk into oblivion.

Not one ancient moulding, not one architrave column, or broken cornice, is before us that is not calculated to excite admiration by its own inherent merits, to call up recollections of importance from knowledge and memory, or inspire the cultivated mind with useful projects and elegant designs.

The most original thinker, and even the wildest wanderer in poetic conception, must have some foundation on which to raise the superstructure that may prove the temple of his fame. Where shall he find one so broad, so safe, as that supplied by the aggregate wealth of the mighty minds that have preceded him—they who found in the towering rock and the arborescent tree theories of utility and grandeur; and in 'leaf, fruit, and flower', examples of ornament for taste to combine and art to perpetuate in design so perfect as to offer examples to all after ages? In point of fact it must be admitted that the three orders of Architecture invented by the Greeks remain, to the present day, proof of that highly talented people having apparently exhausted the power of invention

in this important object, since all deviations from them can only claim to be varieties. Nay, not even a single moulding has been added to those of which they have supplied so many beautiful examples.

That the Greeks were deeply indebted for their knowledge of the arts to Egyptians, a people far more ancient and powerful than themselves, we can scarcely doubt; but however valuable the lessons they received on subjects connected with interminable labour, magnificence of design, and durability of workmanship, nothing has yet occurred in modern research through that wonderful country, which tends to rob them of this honour.

In achieving it we may surely say with Milton,<sup>1</sup> they rose 'to the heaven of invention'.

## THE PICTURE-ROOM.

(NOW KNOWN AS THE HOGARTH ROOM.)

Entering the Hogarth Room we appreciate that the pictures are all of a high character and are seen by the best possible light. The ceiling of the room adds also to the effect, from its varied and pictorial forms, being the most elaborate of any in the mansion. The principal attraction here (though by no means that which excites the most pleasurable emotion) will be found in surveying the pictures of Hogarth, all of which are in perfect preservation, and of the highest reputation. He was a severe but powerful teacher of morality, and we will venture to say that the lessons he gave, here viewed with that character of life which colour only can bestow, when once read, will never be forgotten. It is well, in a twofold sense, that,

<sup>1</sup> Probably Mrs. Hofland was really recalling the chorus of 'Henry V', and quoting Shakespeare unawares.



from the application of folding shutters,<sup>1</sup> after having duly considered them, some of the subjects may be removed from view ; otherwise the clenched hands, fiery eyes, and closed teeth of the rake when he has effected his total ruin at the gaming-table ; the same wretched being in prison, with the victim of his seductive arts fainting before him, and the pot-boy refusing the draught for which his parched lip is thirsting, till the money (which he has not) is paid ; and the horrible display of his miseries in a mad-house—would render the spectator utterly incapable of relishing the beauties around him. They have a power of enchaining every faculty within their own awful sphere – compelling us to gaze on that which we fear to behold, and to think on that from which we desire to fly, and in many an after-hour haunting the memory and awakening virtuous sorrow or holy resolution.

But let us now look on drawings by Piranesi, Clérissseau, Zucchi ; and the two views of Venice by Canaletto. ‘Milton dictating to his Daughters’, an exquisite drawing by R. Westall, also claims attention : never had that excellent Artist a more happy conception of poetic dignity or filial tenderness, for all that the eye, the mind, or the heart requires in a subject of such touching interest. Circe surrounded by her Nymphs, by Howard ; a composition combining with all the richness of an imagination wont to revel in the splendid poetry of mythology, a finer tone of colour, and more finished detail in accompaniment, than is usual even with him.

Again the shutters unfold on the South side and

<sup>1</sup> For the convenience of visitors the eight Hogarth pictures of the Rake's Progress are all hung together on the end wall, but as here described in Sir John Soane's time ‘the scenes of vice and misery’ were inside the cabinet of the north wall.

we find architectural designs said to be 'visions in the gay morning of youth'; and so they might be from the variety of their fine forms, thrown together with the lavish expenditure of a mind rich to profusion; but they bear not less the impress of matured knowledge and solid judgement, enabled to choose and to combine whatever of magnificence and elegance the ancient or the modern world could offer; whether of ruins from the plains of Asia, or designs from the cities of Europe—majestic in decay or splendid in perfection.

The drawing here given of a superb palace designed in Rome at a very early period in Sir John Soane's professional life (1779) cannot fail to be attractive to every eye, and most peculiarly to that of the artist. It was made under all those circumstances likely to awaken the enthusiasm of genius and direct its energies; for he was surrounded by those magnificent buildings and mighty ruins best calculated to form the judgement and correct the imagination, when seeking to bod forth

'The form of things unseen'.

The other design for a palace (1821) has perhaps more immediate claims upon our attention, and not fewer upon our admiration, as being actually intended for our own beloved country which has long been reproached by our neighbours on the continent with great deficiency in this respect. Had this splendid design been carried into effect by being erected in St. James's Park,<sup>1</sup> on Constitution Hill, where all the surrounding land was the property of the crown, and could be rendered available for the purposes of pleasure and utility,

<sup>1</sup> Green Park with frontage to Piccadilly.



without expense, it is evident that this want would have been fully supplied, and a palace provided meet for the sovereign of this great empire.

The design here given evidently combines the magnificence and dignity demanded in an edifice of so much national importance, with the elegant convenience required in a place of habitation; and it would have formed a proud object from the principal entrance of the metropolis, justified our claims of rivalry with other states, and been consistent with our loyal attachment to our paternal sovereign.

What we have in lieu of the palace so planned we now see (or rather have seen, for some of the more offensive excrescences of the Pimlico palace<sup>1</sup> have vanished); what that unfortunate pile of building has cost, and must cost, before the grounds contiguous, and necessary for its completion, are purchased, and it is rendered a dwelling for a king—(a suitable one it never will be)—it is perhaps better that we should never know.

But another removal (of the shutters) presents other designs, of equal beauty and alike pictorial in effect, many of which are executed, and adorn the land we live in. More especially, we observe the Bank of England in various points of view, and designs for buildings which are now in Whitehall, and forming part of the unfinished plan adverted to in the Dining-room. Beautiful and attractive as the pictures certainly are, yet will the eye of the spectator frequently stray from them to that open portion of the room in which we can look down upon the Monk's Parlour, and where, in a beautiful recess, lighted through the medium of richly coloured glass, and lined by equally excellent

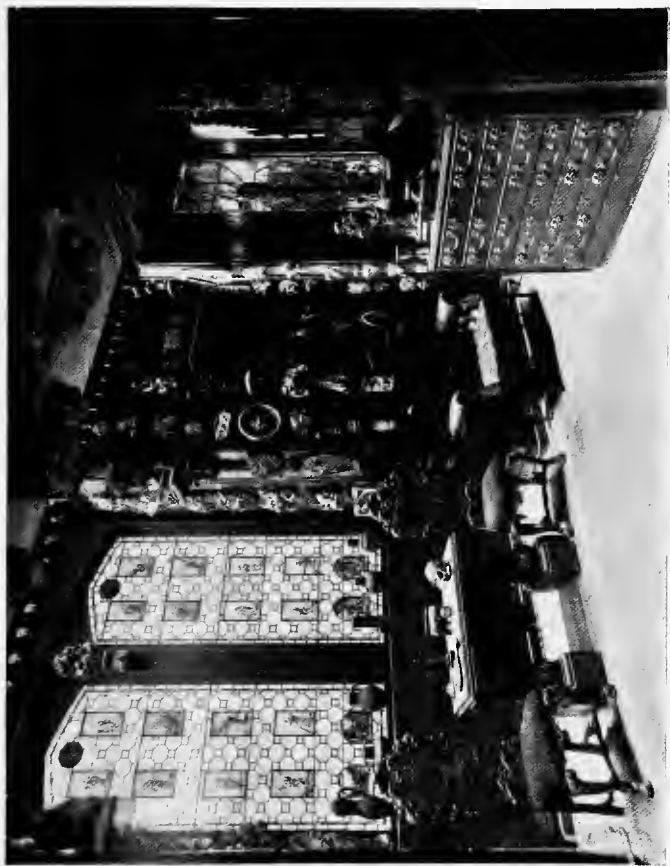
<sup>1</sup> Buckingham Palace, by John Nash. £700,000.

pictures, stands the Nymph of Westmacott—the tardy rival of her who has enchanted the world two thousand years—but not less lovely; and perhaps fated, in succeeding generations, to place the English sculptor on the same pedestal with the Grecian. Here we have also admirable models of the Bank; and John Kemble in Coriolanus, by Sir F. Bourgeois, which is the more valuable, as it displays the characteristic graces of the actor in that ‘noble Roman’ which he made all his own, and gives also a faithful portrait of the man.

On the splendid Flowers of Mrs. Pope every eye will rest with pleasure—the design and execution of this lovely picture reflect equal honour upon the amiable artist; for the former is highly poetical and purely feminine, the latter all the most passionate admirer of these beautiful productions of nature could wish for.

### THE MONK'S PARLOUR.

Before arriving at the monk's retreat, we have had several indications of the pleasure we should receive there; and expectation is more than gratified on our entrance. Whatever can be desired by a religious recluse will be found here, and much also that an age of luxury demands as essential for comfort in a certain class—and Padre Giovanni is unquestionably a gentleman. He has retired from a world he was fitted to adorn, not from satiety or disgust, but from motives of piety, or a taste for retirement, aided by those sorrows inseparable from the condition of our being, and which naturally indispose us, after a certain age, to mix in the turmoil of life. His heart's dear partner has long been taken from the evil to come;



PARLOUR OF PADRE GIOVANNI.

the daughter whose beauty delighted, whose tenderness consoled him, has followed her to the grave; and the son, who should have supplied the place of both, is become an alien to his home and his country. Whither should he go, save to a retreat where, at least, 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary will be soon at rest'?

Here will he find all, and more than all, his heart desires. Behold his oratoire enriched by a carved crucifix, on which his taste may expatiate whilst his devotion kindles. Here are recesses for the relics he deems inestimable, and the missals<sup>1</sup> which shall beguile his solitary hours. His apartment is covered with the products of various countries on which he may meditate, and the works of various ages with which his studies have made him familiar; and his presses are stored with countless drawings of ecclesiastical edifices, dear to his memory and congenial to his tastes and pursuits; and he looks upon them through windows of painted glass, presenting subjects still more sacred. The richly tinted light descending to his apartment bestows on every object that mellow lustre which aids the all-pervading sentiment: it is light subdued, not exhausted—an autumnal, not a wintry and waning ray, and becomes about midday perfectly splendid being aided in effect by the brightness of the carpet, and chairs cushioned with crimson silk.

These luxuries do not quite accord with the simplicity and voluntary poverty demanded by conventual life; but they are far short of the princely luxuries of the Prior of Alcobaca, described with such inimitable humour by the author

<sup>1</sup> Now in the Breakfast-parlour in a glass case under the window.



A VIEW, FROM THE MONK'S CELL.

of 'Vathek'.<sup>1</sup> Our imagined padre is the last representative of an order to whom, after all, we are much indebted; for whilst Learning and the Arts, which followed in its train, were hidden in the cells of the monks, surely they were its preservers, and have a claim on the gratitude of those who benefit by their guardianship. If they were too indolent to examine their stores, too illiterate to estimate them, yet they did not, like the barbarous Caliph, in their ignorance and bigotry therefore destroy them. And even in the darkest ages, some master-spirits lurked beneath the cowl—witness the Venerable Bede and the holy Cuthbert; and when the art of printing—that art sent in mercy to enlighten and renovate the world—visited our shores, it was welcomed by the monks of Oxford, and patronized warmly by the Abbot of Westminster, the first press in London being worked by Caxton under his roof. Nay, was it not a monk who tore the veil from our eyes, the chains from our hands, and bestowed on us the Reformation?

But all things fade away—even the creatures of our day-dreams, and poor Padre Giovanni is no more. We leave the beautiful *parloir*, where he alternately 'held high converse with the mighty dead', and enjoyed the intercourse of friendship with the gifted living, to stand beside his tomb.

#### CORRIDOR LEADING TO ANTE-ROOM.

Banks, Flaxman, and Chantrey have contributed to render this a delightful spot by the choice productions of their Art, making us feel proud of their names, and flattered that they are our

<sup>1</sup> Wm. Beckford of Fonthill Abbey (1760-1844). 'Vathek', 1784.



TOMB AND CLOISTER OF PADRE GIOVANNI.

countrymen. Banks's deep knowledge of the antique, and exquisite appreciation of classical beauty, place him in the first rank of British sculptors.

‘A sense of beauty in all beauteous things,  
Knowledge of Art, and purity of taste,’

were the characteristics of Flaxman's truly excellent sculptures. His classical style is shown to great advantage in the shield of Achilles—a subject congenial to his studies. In his many monumental designs, we find (in addition to the grace and simplicity for which he was celebrated) the most touching pathos, and a grandeur of character subdued by that piety which he felt forcibly, and represented faithfully. Of Chantrey we may well say, that if Shakespeare was called ‘Nature's sweetest child’, so may he be termed ‘Nature's truest sculptor’, for truth—a truth united to grace, delicacy, and sublimity is found in all his works. Phidias, of whose breathing marbles so much has for many ages been said, never chiselled forms more instinct with life than *his*; for even of this lovely child before us, we should say ‘it is not death, but the infant sleepeth’.

### THE ANTE-ROOM.

The Ante-room, adjoining the Belzoni chamber, is a perfect treasury to the lovers of antiquity. The finely classic character of the sleeping Endymion, accompanied by his faithful hound; the air of timid alarm in the countenance of Andromeda, combined with her habitual grace and dignity, excite our warmest admiration, and recall us to the days of Roman art and Roman glory.



Yet do we not fail to see, in the excellent designs of Banks and Flaxman, that genius is bound neither to time, nor place, nor people; and wherever the works of these artists appear, their claims must be allowed for originality of invention and powerful execution.

Whether examining the Ante-room with its many attractions, or re-entering the corridor and proceeding towards the catacombs, we are alike sensible 'that we here attain that first of intellectual beauties, which, in every production, whether of nature or art, resides in the exact correspondence between the end we propose and the means we employ'. It is evident that the hand, or rather the mind, which has arranged the beautiful fragments, massive pillars, ancient sculptures, and various decorations around us, intended that sentiment to pervade our bosoms, proper to the visitants of the dead, who are not therefore the personally regretted; and under this impression we reach the catacombs.

### THE CATACOMBS.

The cinerary urns here arranged are a singularly fine collection of ancient monuments, being all in excellent preservation, and generally of great beauty. The inscriptions on many are perfectly legible, and the sculptures with which they are ornamented preserve their original sharpness. All are of white marble; and from the value of the material, and the superiority of the workmanship, they have undoubtedly been the depositories of the ashes of the great and the wealthy among the Romans; although, as Heliogabalus sent for alabaster to the Thebais in order to form it into a

tomb for himself, and we read of an Italian lady of quality who caused her alabaster urn to be placed in a strong building between two hollowed stones, in order to its safer preservation—it is fair to infer that this scarce and precious material was considered more valuable and suitable for the tombs of the patricians, but that it could rarely be obtained even by them. We cannot contemplate these sacred receptacles of the dead without being struck with the changes which time, and warfare, and even a pure taste and a love for knowledge, make in the situation and disposition of all earthly things. No property was better secured by the laws of Italy than that pertaining to the rites of burial; and the disposition of tombs, and the privilege of having a cinerary urn, was a valuable gift to the freedman who had served his master faithfully. Bitter maledictions were vented against all who violated the rights of sepulture; and the sistrum was frequently pictured on monumental stones, as being the symbol of Isis, 'who was esteemed by the heathens to be a benevolent goddess that took care of the repose of the dead'. 'May he draw down the wrath of Isis!' 'May the benevolent Isis be provoked at him!' 'May the mysteries of the peaceful Isis be angry with him!' 'May he draw down the wrath of the people of Rome and of the gods!'—are invocations still extant on cinerary urns, indicative of the strong feelings of the ancients on this point; and this unquestionably may be termed an original sentiment in human nature, which has travelled from the creation, with little exception, down to the present day.

To remove, however, is not to desecrate; and if the spirits of the departed hover round their ashes,

neither the matron nor the warrior whose dust reposes here have cause to bewail their destination;—in a land of freedom, arts, and arms, they rather have regained than lost the country worthy of their love and their adoption.

### SEPULCHRAL CHAMBER.

On entering the *Sepulchral Chamber*, notwithstanding intense anxiety to behold an object so unique and so celebrated as the Belzoni Sarcophagus, I confess that the place in which this wonderful monument of antiquity is situated became the overpowering attraction. Far above, and on every side, were concentrated the most precious relics of Architecture and Sculpture, disposed so happily as to offer the charm of novelty, the beauty of picturesque design, and that sublimity resulting from a sense of veneration due to the genius and the labours of the 'mighty dead'. The light admitted from the dome appeared to descend with a discriminating effect, pouring its brightest beams on those objects most calculated to benefit by its presence—marble urns, sculptured with fine forms engaged in the performance of religious mysteries, or overhung with the foliage of the consecrated vine—busts, exhibiting the too-expressive features of Messalina, the humours of a drunken faun, or the composed countenance of a philosopher—thence the rays fall more soberly on massive friezes of stone elaborately wrought, pillars, urns, and bronzes—until they reach that costly receptacle for the dead, which is thus enshrined.

Within this unparalleled sarcophagus, formed of the most beautiful alabaster, reposed a sovereign of Egypt, when Egypt as a nation stood alone in

the world. At his bidding assembled thousands raised those prodigious edifices which the Baron Denon pronounced 'the work and the abode of giants': his smile was beneficent as the Nile; his frown destructive as the simoon of the desert. But his power extended not beyond the tomb; although respect for the dead was more cultivated among the Egyptians than even the Romans, and the 'immense and superb excavation' prepared for his resting-place was built up carefully by double barriers, yet it had been discovered and violated long before our own enterprising Belzoni disinterred the tomb. The royal body was gone,<sup>1</sup> the lid of the precious sarcophagus broken; and it appears probable that the place had been more effectually hidden, in order to conceal the spoliation.

The more we contemplate this interesting memorial of antiquity and regal magnificence, the more our sense of its value rises in the mind. We consider the beauty and scarcity of the material—its transparency, the rich and mellow hue—the largeness of the original block, the adaptation of its form to the purpose intended, which was unquestionably to receive a body enclosed in numerous wrappings and doubly cased, according to the custom of the Egyptians. We then examine the carving of innumerable figures, doubting not that the history of a life fraught with the most striking events is here recorded,<sup>2</sup> gaze on the beautiful features of the female form sculptured at the

<sup>1</sup> Hidden B. C. 970, rediscovered about 1872, and now in the Gizeh Museum at Cairo.

<sup>2</sup> The writing was not deciphered in Soane's time. It is the 'Book of the Dead'. See the Account of the Sarcophagus, Soane Museum Publication, No. 2.

bottom of the sarcophagus, and conclude it to be that of the goddess Isis,<sup>1</sup> the elongated eye and the delicate foot closely resembling those drawings of her given by the learned Montfaucon, and repeat the exclamation of Belzoni, when he declared that the day on which he found this treasure was the happiest of his life.

‘I consider’, says he, ‘that fortune has made me rich, for she has given me that extreme pleasure which wealth cannot purchase—the pleasure of discovering what has been long sought in vain, and of presenting the world with a new and perfect monument of antiquity, which can be recorded as superior to any other in point of grandeur, style, and preservation.’

Who that beholds the result of his labour will not sympathize in the feelings of that enthusiastic and enterprising traveller?—who that has in imagination followed himself and the faithful partner of his cares<sup>2</sup> over burning sands, and amongst savage tribes, or seen them in their desolate dwelling among the tombs, exposed to hunger and thirst, disease and injury—will not share in that joy, which was so excessive as to obliterate all memory of the past, all fears for the future, and to render (for a time, at least) the finder of the tomb a greater and a happier man than its occupier had ever been?

If, in the hour of midday splendour, the sarcophagus appears only a superb and suitable finish to the works of art by which it is surrounded, and more calculated to complete the impression conveyed by the whole, than to claim exclusive and

<sup>1</sup> Nut, Goddess of Heaven and Queen of the Gods.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Soane in 1824 purchased the Sarcophagus from the widow of Belzoni, the Italian Traveller and Antiquary (1778-1823).

individual preference ; it should be viewed by lamplight also.<sup>1</sup> Seen by this medium every surrounding object, however admirable in itself, becomes subservient to the sarcophagus—the ancient, the splendid, the wonderful sarcophagus is before us and all else are but accessories to its dignity and grandeur ; a mingled sense of awe, admiration, and delight pervades our faculties, and is even oppressive in its intensity, yet endearing in its associations ; for sweet and tender memories unite us to the grave.

Deep masses of shadow, faint gleams that rise like *ignes fatui* from the adjoining crypt, lights that shine like lustrous halos round marble heads, others more vague and indistinct, yet beautiful in their revealings, present appearances beheld as in a dream of the poets' elysium ; and without enlarging the objects, the scene itself, under this artificial illumination, appears considerably expanded. By degrees this space becomes peopled—figure after figure emerges from the crypt and corridors, where they had loitered in the gloom ; they assemble round the sarcophagus, which sheds from within a pale unearthly light upon the silent awe-struck beings that surround it. Fair and lovely they appear, the sons and daughters of a high-born race, exempt from the common evils of life, but awake to all its generous sensibilities and higher perceptions. Pensive is every countenance, and soft is every falling footstep ; yet in gentle accents many a voice breathes thanks to him who hath rolled back the current of time to show them glorious visions of the past, yet taught them to feel even in the hour of pleasure itself that

'The paths of glory lead but to the grave'.

<sup>1</sup> The only means of lighting the museum until the introduction of the electric light.

Such, I believe, were the feelings of all who had the gratification of witnessing this most impressive scene in the year 1825, when Sir John Soane had it thus prepared for three evenings, during which the rank and talent of this country, to an immense number, including many foreigners of distinction, enjoyed an exhibition as striking as it must ever be unrivalled.

Had any one of that gay company been placed alone in the sepulchral chamber at the 'witching hour of night', when

'Churchyards yawn, and graves give up their dead', when the flickering lights became self-extinguished, and the last murmuring sounds from without ceased to speak of the living world—it is probable that even the healthiest pulse would have been affected with the darker train of emotions which a situation so unallied to common life is calculated to produce. The awe ameliorated by beauty, and softened by tender reminiscence, would be exchanged for the mysterious expectation of some terrific visitant from the invisible world; and the very strongest mind would exclaim with Hamlet

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy'.

## THE CRYPT

On bidding adieu to the sarcophagus and the place which enshrines it so worthily, we enter the Crypt, which is also of an Egyptian character, and may be termed a 'place of tombs', for here hath memory poured its tribute of the owner's affection as a husband and a father,

On the back wall of the last recess, lit by light stealing down from above, is a tall, white-marble tablet with a black border inscribed :

*To the Memory of a beloved wife  
who departed this life  
on the twenty-second day of November,  
MDCCCXV.*

*'Epitaph by a friend'*  
(Mrs. Barbara Hofland).

'I did not know thee in that happier hour,  
When smiling youth upon the lap of life  
Sprinkles her gayest flow'rs: it was not mine  
To catch the early sparkles of thine eyes,  
Or list the playful wit of youthful hours,—  
Dew-drops that gem the rosy bands of hope,  
And love, and joy, with graces all their own.  
Yet, oh! how much remained to tell the past,—  
How rich an harvest shew'd what spring had been!  
Lamented friend! thou hadst indeed a heart  
Illumed with virtues, whose transcendent blaze,  
Like the bright comèt, seldom seen, nor long,  
But once beheld, can be forgot no more.

There is One,  
Whose stricken heart, whose downward-bending eye,  
Best tell thy goodness, best proclaim his loss;  
For he hath climb'd the steeps of life with thee,  
Repos'd in myrtle bowers, gain'd Fortune's smile,  
Inhaled the noblest breath, and felt  
That all were sweet,—for all were shared with thee.

Eternal Father! Thou, whence all proceeds  
Of woe or joy that marks this mingled state  
Of transient being, look in mercy down,  
To soothe and heal his lacerated heart;  
And through the weary lapse of ling'ring time  
Support him, till that welcome hour arrive  
Which grants reunion in a better world.'

Below a marble tablet has been added, inscribed.

*'To the Memory of  
JOHN SOANE JUNR.  
who departed this life in his thirty-seventh year,  
on the twenty-first day of October—MDCCCXXIII.'*



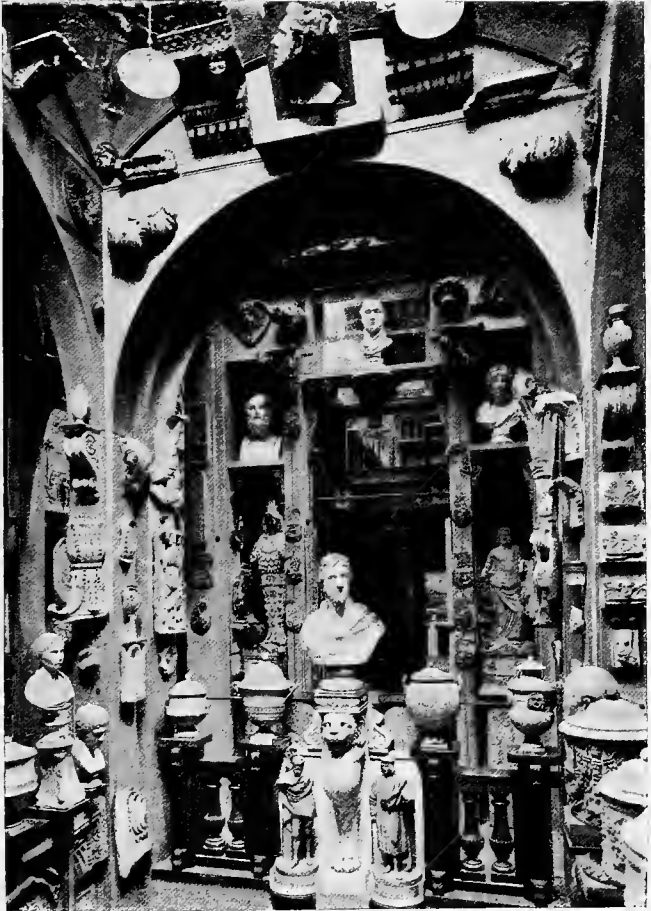


THE TOMB OF SIR JOHN AND MRS. SOANE IN OLD SAINT PANCRAS CHURCHYARD.

*The Return to the Ground-floor*

## THE DOME

On ascending the staircase, and entering the colonnade, we become immediately sensible that we have reached the Museum itself. The extent of the place before us, and the multiplicity of the works of art by which we are in a manner enveloped, and the ingenuity elicited to create space and obtain advantageous situations for those specimens most worthy of consideration, all press upon us the assurance that we have arrived at that 'promised land' to which, from various parts, we have been long looking. The first object that arrests attention must be the Apollo, from the commanding character of its beauty, the grace and dignity of its attitude, and the situation in which it is placed, like Milton's Adam, as 'the god of this new world'. The beauty of this fine statue, like every other object of interest around, is considerably enhanced by that exquisite distribution of light and colour which, often from undiscovered sources, sheds the most exquisite hues, and produces the most magical effects throughout the Museum, thereby communicating the only charm in which an assemblage of marbles must be deficient. The ornament which crowns the inside of the dome is a remarkable proof of this, light from below being so thrown upon it as to render it of a pearl-like hue and perfectly defined; whereas under common circumstances it would have been in darkness. Life and colour are so intimately conjoined that we cannot separate them without losing one: even the most breathing sculptures 'that Art has bequeathed to Time' require some aid from those ethereal tints which at the same moment rescue them from the



THE DOME OVER THE SARCOPHAGUS.  
*With Chantry's Bust of Sir John Soane.*

characteristics of death, and reveal those of life, beauty, and intelligence. A writer of acknowledged genius, who has deeply studied the subject, thus speaks of colour : ' We feel as if there is a moral as well as material beauty in colour, an inherent gladness, an intention on the part of Nature to share with us a pleasure felt by herself. Colours are the smiles of Nature. When they are extremely smiling, and break forth into other beauty, they are her laughs ; as in the flowers.' ' The laughing flowers', says the poet, and it is the business of the poet to feel truths beyond the proof of the mechanician. Nature, at all events, humanly speaking, is manifestly very fond of colour, *for she has made nothing without it*. Her skies are blue, her fields green, her waters vary with her skies ; her animals, vegetables, minerals, are all coloured. . . . Youthful beauty in the human being is partly made up of it. One of the three great arts with which Providence has adorned and humanized the mind, Painting, is founded upon the love and imitation of it. And the magnificence of empire can find nothing more precious to possess, or to be proud of wearing, than

' Fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,  
 Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,  
 Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,  
 And seld-seen costly stones, of so great price,  
 As one of them, indifferently rated,  
 May serve, in peril of calamity,  
 To ransom great kings from captivity'.

This conception of the value of colour, as expressed by Mr. Leigh Hunt and Marlowe (our fine old poet), undoubtedly influenced Sir John Soane when he introduced coloured lights into this and in various other parts of his mansion. He has thus brought painting, so far as it is colour, to

embellish Architecture and Sculpture. The tenderest hues of the primrose, deepening into golden yellow, brilliant crimson, regal scarlet, emerald green, and splendid purple, shed their richest tints wherever they are required to give tone and lustre to those invaluable works of Art, which so well merit investigation under the most favourable circumstances.

Of course, these exquisite effects vary with the time and atmosphere; but the coloured glass is so judiciously disposed (being assisted by innumerable reflections from mirrors inserted not obtrusively), that the coldness likely to arise from opaque objects nearly devoid of colour is completely avoided, and a diffusion of warm and cheerful light cast upon everything we behold. Everywhere such circumstances would produce pleasurable sensations; but they are particularly valuable in this country, since the collector, however he might succeed in obtaining treasures of Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman antiquities, could not add the pure ether and the glowing skies of those more-favoured climates. Yet, those happier climates we cannot envy whilst enjoying proof, in the munificence, energy, and ability, which united to form this Museum and bestow it on the country that

‘Man is the fruit our nobler realms supply,  
And souls are ripened ’neath our northern sky.’

### COLONNADE.

Proceeding through the colonnade, or either of the parallel aisles (all of which are richly stored with works of Art, besides what is named above), we visit those magnificent cinerary vases which

are first seen from the Sepulchral Chamber ; and on examination know not whether the variety and elegance of their forms, or the graceful designs and laborious workmanship with which they are adorned, excite our admiration the most. Many ancient busts are interspersed, which are all of the highest order of Art, and demand our closest attention ; but there is one modern work of such superior excellence as not only to compel our observation, but make us proud of the land we live in, and of the Arts which adorn it.

The bust of Sir John Soane, presented by Sir Francis Chantrey, is in itself an object of great interest, not only as being a perfect likeness, and a work worthy of the genius of the first living sculptor, but as giving proof of the friendship and high estimation in which the truly great will naturally hold each other. It is a gift to posterity, for which many a future race will be grateful.

Proceeding onwards, views of this admirable marble are given from numerous reflections ; and in every point of view we find it alike faithful in portraiture and happy in expression.

‘The pencil, by an accurate delineation of forms, may speak to the eye, and the canvas may glow with the vivid tints of nature ; but it is not through the medium of words than an adequate idea can be communicated of a place like this.’

### THE NEW STUDENTS'-ROOM.

(Formerly the site of Sir John Soane's private office.)

In the New Students'-room hangs a portrait which, although of small pretension as a work of art, has yet great interest ; for it has the appear-

ance of having been, in his early life,<sup>1</sup> a faithful likeness of him, to whose commanding genius, indefatigable perseverance, and munificent liberality the country is indebted for all that we have here beheld, and immense collections of drawings and books it is impossible for us to see. But to many a future generation will these stores be unfolded from age to age; and who may scan the extent of their beneficent effects in smoothing the path of knowledge to the industrious student, and awakening the enthusiasm and energy of the highly-gifted but poorly-endowed youth, who otherwise

'Might wage with fortune an eternal war,  
Check'd by the scoff of pride, by Envy's frown,  
And Poverty's unconquerable bar;  
Then drops into the grave unpitied and unknown.'  
Beattie's 'Minstrel.'

Who shall say how much honour to the Arts, how much glory to the country, and increasing fame to the founder, may radiate from this centre, which in itself comprises examples of every age and country, the advice and experience which appertains to all climates, situations, and tastes; and in its own inherent wealth, splendour, and arrangement affords undeniable proof of what one man during his own life may acquire and accomplish, when he unites industry to genius, and integrity to perseverance.

Below the portrait is the large Canaletto; esteemed his *chef-d'œuvre*, and well deserving the praise, being all truth and brilliance.

We are next attracted to the relics of Tivoli, a name connected with all that is most delightful even in Italy, the land of delight. Every object

<sup>1</sup> Painted in Rome in 1779 by C. W. Hunneman (c. 1730-1793).

is fraught with the poetry of Art: the model of the entablature of the Temple of Tivoli carries back the mind to the age in which it was erected; the wonderful site which is crowned by it as with a diadem: the surrounding country with its peerless variety of beauty, in which Adrian and Maecenas dwelt in palaces that mock the puny attempts of modern grandeur, and where Horace enjoyed luxuries more congenial to a poet's taste than magnificence bestows.

No wonder that Sir John Soane cherishes the memory of a place endeared to the poet and the painter; for many an hour has he lingered beneath the Doric columns of the generous Roman's villa, traversed its splendid corridors, and climbed to the mouldering roof that he might behold what Forsythe describes when he says, 'The hill of Tivoli is all over picture. The city, the villas, the ruins, the rocks, the cascades in the foreground; the Sabine hills, the three Monticelli, Soracte, Frascati, the Campagne, and Rome in the distance.' With such scenes before him, at that happy period of existence when 'all things charm, for life itself is new', unquestionably many a day-dream awoke the imagination of the enthusiastic Architect, which has left the impression of its sweetness to this very hour. The spells of passion and the lures of folly vanish before the exorcism of time and experience; but the benignant witchery of intellectual attraction is binding to the verge of existence. Remembering those emotions of astonishment and delight awakened at Tivoli, undoubtedly he intended, by the beautiful objects here assembled, to recall his past sensations and express his confirmed admiration.

In quitting these attractive scenes, every visitor



must congratulate himself, and those who are to follow him, on the permanency of this establishment. Other museums have been scattered when their authors died, or have been individually lost, from their union with the national one ; but funds for the support of this have been so liberally provided, and so wisely arranged, that it must remain a self-sufficing and perpetual, as well as noble, gift to the country, and a school of inestimable value, particularly to the students of Architecture ;

‘For though, by nature’s liberal bounty bless’d,  
The fire of genius glow within the breast,—  
Collateral studies still must fan the flame,  
That clearly burning brightens into fame.’  
Shee’s ‘Elements of Art’.<sup>1</sup>

## ANTE-ROOM TO BREAKFAST-PARLOUR.

The observations upon the Dressing-room and Study apply still more closely to this Ante-room to the Breakfast-parlour, which is a small but fascinating receptacle of precious things. It resembles a highly polished gem or miniature, depicting the most lovely features, or the most decisive and intellectual characteristics of mental power. Beautiful casts from antique busts, rich fragments of sculpture, a mosaic fragment of great beauty,<sup>2</sup> costly bronzes, the deities of Hindostan by Banks, and designs by Michael Angelo, form only a portion of the attraction ; but upon one by the last-named artist the eye rests with more than ordinary interest, for it is a memento as affecting as admirable, alas ! it is unfinished—it was his last !

<sup>1</sup> Sir Martin Shee, P.R.A. (1769-1850).

<sup>2</sup> The inlaid marble panel now fixed at the back of the pedestal on which stands the bust of Sir John Soane,

Nor should the eye neglect to examine the four beautifully carved ivory chairs, once the property of Tippoo Saib. How many recollections are these chairs calculated to awaken of fallen greatness, Eastern luxury, and British valour—a valour not more happily than justly exerted against a tyrant, whose cruelty and ambition rendered him the scourge alike of his own country and of those around him! Retributive justice has scattered the proofs of his wealth and the objects of his pride through that land whose subjects he immured in the most horrible dungeons, and treated with a barbarity humanity shudders to recall, but should never cease to remember: and even these costly and delicate memorials remind us of his vices, and bid us rejoice in his fall.

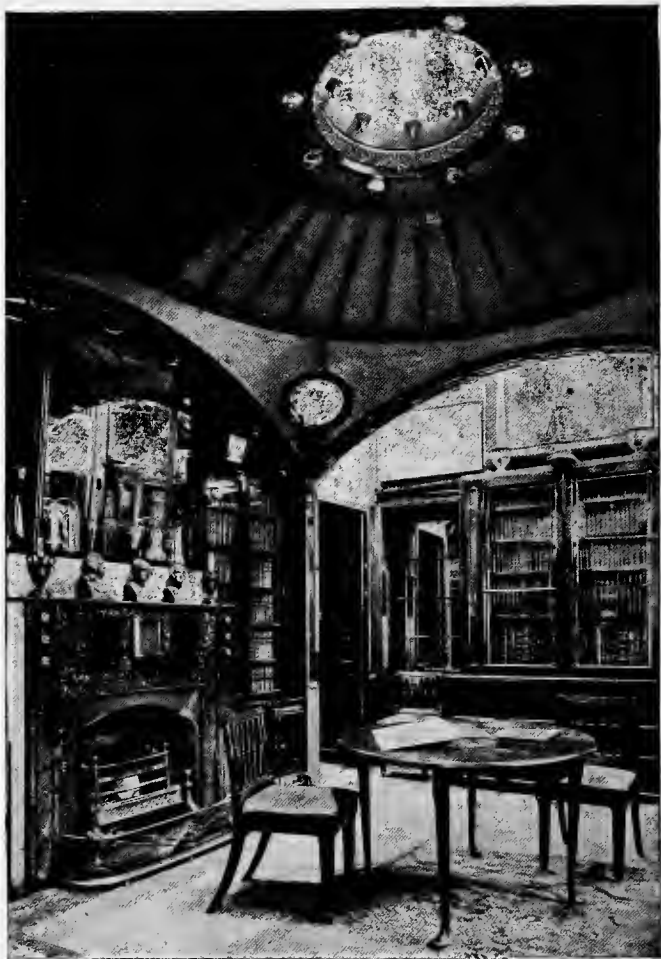
Attention will be last of all drawn to the two portraits by Downman hung near the doorway, in which we perceive a strong family likeness. The elderly lady of most benign aspect is the mother of Sir John Soane, who sat for this portrait in her eighty-fourth year: the handsome youth above is his eldest son. Notwithstanding the great disparity of age, the likeness between these relatives is remarkable; nor is their resemblance to Sir John himself less striking.

### THE BREAKFAST-PARLOUR.

This beautiful room, in its forms, proportions, and decorations, combines, in an extraordinary degree, all that is required for simple comfort, with whatever is demanded by taste and intellect. The fine drawings, numerous books, and poetical pictures offer to the polished mind and cultivated taste the purest pleasures, and those alone con-

sistent with the feelings hitherto awakened. In the threefold likenesses given of that wonderful man, who so lately 'kept the world in awe', our memories of the past are powerfully awakened, and we retrace the rise and fall of the soldier of fortune—the sovereign of an adoring people, the dispenser of crowns, the conqueror who poured blood like water through every kingdom of Europe, and the prisoner who found in a few hearts still attached to the *man* (no longer emperor) perhaps a solace for much that he had lost. It appears from these portraits that the fine features of Bonaparte became much more amiable and ingenuous in expression as he advanced in life. His aspect is by no means agreeable (although the outline is much the same with that so generally admired) as here given in the portrait painted for Josephine. Ah! how much of the proudest triumphs, the bitterest disappointment, the most extraordinary situation in which woman ever was placed, belong to the history of this little picture as connected with its once lovely and beloved possessor.

And could this costly instrument of death reveal its many wanderings, the throbs of those ambitious hearts, the energies of those determined hands, that in days past have held it with a giant's grasp, it would not travel from the burning deserts of Egypt to the freezing banks of the Neva, from the Tuileries to St. Helena, and 'say that all was barren'; for how much of man in his most elevated state of power, and perchance his most degraded state of moral perception, might it not have witnessed? How many of the tenderest ties of existence may it not have broken? Yet was it the gift of friendship, the sign of peace among the most warlike spirits upon earth; and as it passed from



THE BREAKFAST-PARLOUR.

hand to hand, hope and tranquillity looked down from heaven to bless the compact.

Here may it rest for ever and ever, a memento of arts, not arms; and may every gentle, every courteous spirit visiting this their temple, say to the splendid pistol—*Requiescat in pace.*

In this room are also stored a collection of missals and illuminated manuscript volumes of a very superior character. The Flemish manuscript of the fifteenth century, in octavo, is bound in crimson velvet, embroidered in gold, and adorned with twenty-one pages of miniature drawings, all beautifully executed. The other manuscript of the fifteenth century is bound in crimson satin; the corners are of richly embossed silver gilt, the centre plates and clasps consist of beautiful specimens of niello work, mounted in a frame of embossed silver gilt. The Roman missal, or Book of Hours, contains 356 pages, 92 of which are illustrated with miniature paintings by Lucas Van Leyden and his scholars; it is bound in crimson velvet, with corners of silver gilt; the drawings, enriched borders, and capitals are all of exquisite beauty. A Latin bible, MS. vellum, thirteenth century, is ornamented with delicately executed initials. A book of Hours, MS. vellum, in Flemish with miniatures and borders, and lastly, the *Horae B.M.V., &c.*, of the end of the fifteenth century, with miniatures and borders of Flemish art.

### STAIRCASE TO FIRST FLOOR

On ascending the staircase, let not the gay and light-hearted, if they are also the observing and intellectual, expect

‘To trip it deftly as they go’

for it is certain they will be arrested at almost every step by one or other object of interest or subject of contemplation. A small but exquisite sculpture of the archangel Michael transfixing with his spear that rebellious being who was erst 'Lucifer, son of the morning', brings Milton and his peerless poem before us, which we in a short time exchange for the humours of Shakespeare in one of the most ludicrous scenes he ever painted.

### SHAKESPEARE RECESS

We next stop at the recess consecrated to his memory, and there cease to smile, though we are not called upon to sigh; for veneration of his stupendous genius, and 'thick-coming memories' of all that he has taught us to feel and to know, 'possess us wholly'. Before our eyes is a cast from that monument which calls itself 'the true effigies of William Shakespeare'. We have seen many portraits of him, and think that a head more calculated to convey the idea of mental power—features more expressive of benevolence, penetration, and energy—than those of our great poet, will scarcely be found in any actual representation of human nature, at that period of life when he was removed from the world he adorned.

Everything in this recess is in keeping with the sentiment inspired, of honouring the memory and increasing the fame of Shakespeare. The beautiful paintings by Howard, and the cherubs surrounding the ceiling, render it altogether a shrine worthy of him whose glorious name it bears, and whose benign countenance,

'With courteous action,  
Dismisses us to more removed ground'.

Passing a beautiful Mercury,

‘New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,

and a fine bust of Sir William Chambers, the lover of humorous and familiar delineation will dwell with pleasure upon the ‘Smoking-room at Chelsea’, where the old soldier

‘Shoulders his crutch, and tells how fields were won’.

### FRONT DRAWING-ROOM

Entering and passing across the front drawing-room we dwell with pleasure on the Architectural novelty presented in the loggias, which have the singular effect of making the room look larger, at the same time that an elegant individuality of character is imparted to the place, and considerable space obtained for the display of beautiful painted glass, various basso-relievos, bookcases stored with architectural literature, and what must be held of great attraction, a collection of medals struck in honour of Bonaparte, once in possession of the Empress Josephine.

The series of medals here displayed are not quite complete; but there is a charm in their imperfection which renders the deficiency more valuable to the mind endued with sensibility than the bronzes could have been. It appears that where the record of her husband thus given was connected with circumstances in her own opinion indicative of blame, the still fondly attached though cruelly repudiated wife withdrew them from the rest, anxious to preserve unalloyed the glory she adored and the greatness she had shared.

The largest of these medals represents the Emperor holding forth his infant son to his people—

that son for whom she was sacrificed. To her, the very production of this medal must have been 'the unkindest cut of all'; yet she retained it, for it recalled the memory of an hour of triumphant happiness in the life of him to whom she held herself indissolubly attached; and amidst all her personal sorrows, she had still sympathy in his joys. No vulgar-minded woman could have endured this memento of her own degradation; but Josephine was not such—she united to touching tenderness unpretending magnanimity.

A portion of the case in the western loggia contains presentations to Sir John Soane of the Silver and Gold Medals by the Royal Academy, a diamond ring from the Emperor of Russia, and the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals from the Architects of Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> The execution of these last is as great an honour to the Arts of the country as their presentation was to the feelings of those who gave, and to the merits of him who received them.

### BACK DRAWING-ROOM

The beauty of this room is much increased by the opening into the adjoining drawing-room which is hung in the same manner, lighted by large windows, and the cabinets on the walls are completely covered by admirable pictures, and drawings from designs by the possessor.

Among the fine designs which are in these drawings—rendered complete pictures—are some interiors of the House of Lords, which are remarkable for the grandeur and beauty they display; and one of a Monument to the Duke of York, that

<sup>1</sup> Some of these, left by will as heirlooms, are no longer in the collection. The case is now in the Back Drawing-Room.



would have been a splendid ornament to our metropolis if carried into effect, as the statue of that amiable prince would have been protected and also placed much nearer to the eye of the spectator than we behold him from the column now erected.

When we have viewed these beautiful drawings, the eye looks desiringly towards two costly cases in which is stored a collection of beautiful gems, intaglios, and cameos. They are lined with white satin, and show to great advantage the rings and precious stones with which they are studded.

### STAIRCASE TO SECOND FLOOR

Leaving the drawing-rooms we perceive above the door the bust of Sheridan, and examine earnestly those features once animated with

‘The life of pleasure, and the soul of whim :’

his eloquence, his wit, his imprudence, and his sufferings pass rapidly before us. We envy those who hung with enchanted ears on the splendid and pathetic orator, or shared the flashes of that humour wont ‘to set the table in a roar’; and whilst we allow that the companions of his jocund hours might say :

‘They better could have spared a better man,’

we turn and meet the stern, uncompromising, and energetic countenance of William Pitt.

The visions of festive pleasure and sparkling badinage vanish before him, and the sad ‘realities of life’, as they dwell on the page of history, arise to the mind in all their awful bearings of painful or melancholy anticipation. Passing by with sober

step we pay homage to his integrity and his genius, saying, 'Thou wert the pilot that weather'd the storm', but hasten to leave all memory of politics in the purer atmosphere that breathes around the Arts.

Jones's 'Commemoration of the Opening of London Bridge' is highly interesting from its beautiful grouping, happy portraiture, and faithful representation of a scene worthy the historic pencil.

Passing on, we examine more particularly those casts from fragments of antiquity which attracted our attention whilst we were ascending the stairs.

The first, and perhaps the boldest in execution, is over the door which leads to the Model Room ;<sup>1</sup> it is an Eagle and Dog, from the Museo Vaticano. The feathers of the extended wings are not only given with the lightness and beauty of nature, but with the starting buoyancy which indicates awakened rage in the bird of Jove against the ill-fated quadruped. Two reliefs by Banks and a pair of studies by Flaxman stand out in the strong light poured down by the oval lantern above ; from these early works grew the triumphs we have witnessed below. At the very top of the stairs is a fine cast of Ephesian Diana. This statue verifies the observation of Père Montfaucon, as to the general appearance, and yet variety, which is given to this ancient divinity. The one before us resembles the marble in the Museum in all material points, but is more graceful in form, and the swathings round the lower part are decorated entirely with heads of stags ; whereas

<sup>1</sup> The Editor has passed over the description of the Model Room as too long for these pages and mainly interesting to professed students of Architecture. The Models are of two kinds, Antique and Soanic, the latter of great value to architects interested in the work of Sir John Soane.

those animals form a small portion of the embellishments given to the Goddess below.

We have now reached the end of our journey—the close of our expectations; and whilst we gaze eagerly around, in order that nothing may escape us, we are ready to say:

‘Is this indeed the last? That chilling word  
Should never mingle with our sinless joys,  
Nor damp the pure enthusiasm of those souls  
Which Nature has awaken’d and Art nursed,  
Till they forget care, pain, anxiety,  
And live in that bright world which charms the eye.’

However vivid have been the impressions of admiration and surprise excited in the mind of the writer, she is yet fully aware of her own inability in describing those particular objects or general effects which produced her emotions. ‘The language of description’, says a sensible writer, ‘is so very confined, and its phrases so extremely few, that similar objects will often suggest similarity of expression: hence the choicest terms become tiresome from repetition, and the impressions they produce faint and imperfect.’

‘Farewell to thee, “my pleasant task,” farewell!  
If I have wrong’d thee by erratic flight—  
By fantasies which aye with woman dwell,  
Or ignorance that wraps her soul in night,  
When most she wanders in “excess of light,”—  
Pardon I crave—from palace, mansion, cell—  
From all who feel the lofty theme aright,  
For that too bold a toil was here assign’d  
To a worn heart—perchance a failing mind.’

BARBARA HOFLAND.

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